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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MELENDEZ-BARAHONA (El Salvador)

CONTENTS

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued)

Hearing of petitioners

Hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items)*

AGENDA ITEM 98: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS*

AGENDA ITEM 99: ACTIVITIES OF THOSE FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH IMPEDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA*

AGENDA ITEM 100: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS*

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL*

AGENDA ITEM 101: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES*

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING

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* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS (A/C.4/47/7/Add.1 and A/C.4/47/8)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received a document containing a request for hearings relating to the question of the United States Virgin Islands (A/C.4/47/8). If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant the request.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee of the receipt of a communication containing a request for hearings relating to the question of New Caledonia under agenda item 18. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided to have the request circulated as a document of the Committee (A/C.4/7/Add.1).

4. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued) (A/47/23, parts II-VII; A/C.4/47/2 and Add.1-3, A/C.4/47/3-8, A/C.4/47/L.2)

Question of Western Sahara

5. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a draft resolution which had been submitted on the question (A/C.4/47/L.2).

Hearing of petitioners

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Danielle Smith (Western Sahara Awareness Project, Inc.) took a place at the petitioners' table.

7. Ms. SMITH (Western Sahara Awareness Project, Inc.) said that the United Nations, which for almost 30 years had supported the process of decolonization of Western Sahara, was the only institution capable of bringing a just and lasting peace to the region. The Moroccan invasion of 1975, like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, had been a violation of international law.

8. Aerial bombardments by the Moroccan army had forced the Saharans to seek shelter in Algeria, where they currently numbered 165,000. A whole generation of Saharans had come of age under abnormal conditions and many had lost their parents or had been separated from their families. Under Moroccan occupation, the Saharans lived in a permanent state of siege, in constant fear of being imprisoned, tortured and even killed. Amnesty International had confirmed the disappearance of 800 Saharans since 1975. The Moroccan authorities were carrying out a policy of "Moroccanization" and were systematically erasing all traces of Saharan cultural identity.

(Ms. Smith)

9. The major components of the United Nations peace plan for Western Sahara had been accepted by both parties to the conflict. In July 1991, the Saharans living in refugee camps in Algeria had been imbued with optimism, so confident had they been that the United Nations would be able to restore peace and to organize a free and fair referendum; by January 1992, however, the majority had had doubts about the future and had been puzzled by the failure of the United Nations to insist on Moroccan compliance with the peace plan.

10. It seemed that, from the very beginning, the Moroccan Government had had no intention of allowing the plan to succeed. In August 1991, it had attacked sites controlled by the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) and had destroyed buildings and infrastructure specifically constructed for the arrival of United Nations military observers. She described the difficult circumstances under which the military observers whose supplies had been withheld and whose lives had been threatened were operating, as the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee had found; the Foreign Relations Committee's investigation had also found that the Moroccan authorities had restricted the movements of the military units and had refused to provide them with information concerning Moroccan troop strengths and the location of minefields.

11. Morocco had violated the cease-fire 178 times in contrast to 6 violations by the Frente POLISARIO. Through population transfers, it had violated the settlement proposals and challenged the authority of the United Nations, despite its earlier commitments. The outgoing Secretary-General had surprised everyone by proposing, without consulting the Frente POLISARIO, six new criteria for voter identification, thus giving the impression of having ceded to the Moroccan demands. Fortunately, the Security Council had rejected the new criteria and had called upon the incoming Secretary-General to review the question; it was regrettable, however, that the United Nations was renegotiating an issue that had already been resolved in the original settlement proposals.

12. The Moroccan Government had included Western Sahara in a referendum and in elections in held in Morocco. It had responded violently to peaceful demonstrations by Saharans calling for the implementation of the peace plan. She appealed to the Secretary-General to conduct an investigation of the numerous incidents in which Saharan demonstrators had been arrested and, in some cases, had disappeared.

13. The original settlement plan, which had been accepted by both parties, offered a unique opportunity to resolve the question of Western Sahara. The Frente POLISARIO had endeavoured to ensure its success, but unfortunately, Moroccan intransigence threatened to derail the process. The credibility of the United Nations was at stake in the matter, and the Organization should explore all political options with a view to ensuring Morocco's full compliance with the plan, including by imposing sanctions, if necessary.

14. Ms. Smith withdrew.

15. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Theresa K. Smith de Cherif (Sahara Fund, Inc.) took a place at the petitioners' table.

16. Ms. SMITH de CHERIF (Sahara Fund, Inc.) said that in 1991 there had been great hope for a referendum on Western Sahara, but that after a year of shuttle diplomacy and indirect talks, the hope for peace in Western Sahara had all but evaporated. If the United Nations failed in Western Sahara, war would probably resume, bringing instability to the region, which would impair the Organization's ability to carry out other peace-keeping missions or to undertake new operations.

17. The same resolve which the world had shown in confronting the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait must be mobilized for the Saharans. The occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco contravened important principles of international law which should not be allowed to fall by the wayside simply because the Saharans were not rich and did not have oil. Even if they were a small nation, the Saharans were no less deserving of the right to choose their destiny freely.

18. In setting up the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the Security Council had assumed that both parties had agreed to the United Nations plan to use the 1974 Spanish census as the basis for the voter rolls. Even before the entry into force of the cease-fire, however, Morocco had refused to accept the list drawn up on that basis and had demanded an increase of 168.5 per cent in the voter rolls, thus overwhelming the voter identification mechanism. The eligibility criteria proposed by the former Secretary-General appeared to be nothing more than measures to accommodate the Moroccan position and were completely illogical. No agreement on expanding the criteria had been reached in more than a year, and as progress was highly unlikely, the Spanish census, which had a slight margin of error and which had been accepted by both parties, represented an acceptable compromise - especially since it had the merit of having been conducted by Spain, which had no interest in the current conflict. The Security Council should therefore oppose any attempt to predetermine the outcome of the referendum.

19. Issues concerning the accountability of MINURSO cast further doubts on its capacity for successful operations. It was not clear whether there had been deliberate obstruction of the reporting mechanism but, in view of the complaints of military observers concerning the lack of communication with New York and the issue of so-called confirmed or unconfirmed violations, the question arose as to why the United Nations would send military observers into the field if it could not rely on them to confirm violations. In addition, there had been reports of irregularities in MINURSO expenditures, specifically, a difference in the amount which the observers were charged according to whether they were stationed behind Moroccan lines ($70 per day) or in the sector held by the Frente POLISARIO ($65 per day). The fact that the extremely lucrative contract to supply MINURSO with various goods had been awarded to one of the parties to the conflict was likewise deplorable.

(Ms. Smith de Cherif)

20. The Sahara Fund was further concerned that the rights of Saharans had been violated not only by Morocco, which was continuing its pattern of arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detentions of Saharan civilians - several of whom had disappeared - but also by MINURSO, which had turned away asylum-seekers in contravention of the relevant norms of international law.

21. Moreover, Morocco had transferred part of its civilian population into the territory of Western Sahara, in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and of paragraphs 72 and 73 of the peace plan. Such attempts had been stopped in Cambodia, and she wondered why that had not been true in Western Sahara.

22. It was incumbent upon the United Nations to respond to the key questions raised by the situation in Western Sahara, if for no other reason than for the sake of Saharan children, who were the innocent ones.

23. Ms. Smith de Cherif withdrew.

24. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Chopra (Brown University) took a place at the petitioners' table.

25. Mr. CHOPRA (Brown University) said that for the first time since the signing of the Charter, the members with the greatest responsibility in the Organization for maintaining peace and security had found it possible and necessary to ensure that power would begin to pay tribute to reason. Everywhere there was evidence of a brave new world, and Brown University was aware of such a shift from the research it was conducting with the intention of developing a new concept of operations for United Nations peace-keeping forces and other United Nations missions.

26. Military changes often lagged far behind the pace of political development. Unprecedented agreements had committed the Organization to a number of tasks more complex than ever before, but tragically it lacked adequate means to tackle those tasks, and was perhaps heading towards a disaster. The disaster had already begun in Western Sahara.

27. MINURSO itself was a historic experiment, for never before had all five permanent members of the Security Council been represented in an operation in the field. Neither the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia nor the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) had been given the full powers for the maintenance of law and order that MINURSO was supposed to have. However, despite the significance of the MINURSO experiment, it was not perceived as such. The Security Council itself regarded it as a bad experience and the Pentagon cited it as a reason against the participation of United States contingents in United Nations-controlled operations. The military observers in the field had the sense of being part of a forgotten operation for which Headquarters was not providing the requisite political support. The observers, veritable hostages, had no

(Mr. Chopra)

freedom of movement and were operating under the surveillance of Moroccan security forces. The population had no right to communicate with MINURSO and he himself had been arrested twice for trying to meet with United Nations officials.

28. That was costing the Organization its credibility, and the United Nations had become the enemy of Morocco while the Frente POLISARIO was losing faith in the Organization's capacity to fulfil its mandate. Optimism had turned to pessimism, thus intensifying the potential for renewed conflict.

29. The Moroccan authorities were attempting to redefine the identity of the Territory through forced movements of populations, who were given free food and accommodation in Western Sahara but were not free to leave. History had shown that that type of operation had always led to the greatest excesses, to mass expulsions, forced repatriations and in the worst scenarios, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

30. Rather than emphasizing the legal aspect of the problem, issues having to do with the law had, for political expediency, been relegated to diplomatic negotiation. It was generally agreed that the concept of self-determination constituted a legal right and no longer merely a political principle.

31. Reviewing the legal concept of self-determination, he remarked that in the case of Western Sahara the word "people" must refer to the inhabitants of the area delimited by Spanish colonial occupation, a list of whom appeared in the 1974 census conducted by Spanish authorities. One of the parties could not now put forward 120,000 names for addition to that list on the pretext that they were ethnically Saharan. He referred to a number of documents providing a legal basis for the settlement of the question of Western Sahara, which were binding not only on the two parties but also on the United Nations.

32. Namibia and Western Sahara were always cited as illustrations of the principle of self-determination in any basic text on international law, and it would be a tragedy and an irony of history if the credibility of self-determination as a legal principle was undermined in one of the very cases that defined it, and if at the end of the process of decolonizing the continent, the last colony in Africa failed to achieve independence.

33. Mr. Chopra withdrew.

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ahmed (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO)) took a place at the petitioners' table.

35. Mr. AHMED (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO)), recalling Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), said that the sole basis for a referendum of self-determination was the 1974 census. A margin of error was of course

expected. However, instead of a margin of 1 to 5 per cent, Morocco was speaking of a margin of 225 per cent and had come out with a list of 170,000 Moroccan nationals whom it intended to have added to the electoral roll.

36. Furthermore, Morocco had taken a whole series of actions that ran counter to the settlement plan: 170 cease-fire violations; an intensification of the repression of the Saharan civilian population despite the United Nations presence; the organization of elections in which Western Sahara was considered an integral part of the Kingdom of Morocco; and so on. All were measures which, to judge by the reactions of the international press, the United States Senate and the European Parliament, had aroused concern and uncertainty.

37. Worse yet, the former Secretary-General, in his report of 19 December 1991, had, to satisfy Morocco and without the knowledge of the Saharan party, introduced a number of principles contrary to the main clause of the settlement plan, a dismaying step that was unacceptable. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General had undertaken a mediation mission with the intention of bringing the positions of the two parties closer together, but after five months of indirect negotiations, all that he had been able to do was to note the wide divergence of views on principles unconnected with the 1974 census, such as the impartial and independent verification of applications from Moroccan subjects whose ancestors had been born in Western Sahara, in some cases at the beginning of the century, or who had resided for 6 to 12 years in the Territory between 1884 and 1974.

38. Underscoring the responsibility of Morocco, which persisted in seeking a referendum rigged from the start, he appealed to the international community to ensure the success of the process that was under way, because failure could only seriously undermine the credibility of the United Nations. He also called upon the Moroccan leaders not to fail to seize the historic opportunity offered to them to help establish peace, democracy and development in the region.

39. Mr. Ahmed withdrew.

Question of the United States Virgin Islands

Hearing of petitioners

40. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Bourne (Save Long Bay Coalition, Inc.) took a place at the petitioners' table.

41. Ms. BOURNE (Save Long Bay Coalition, Inc.) began by reviewing the origin of the dispute between the Government of the United States Virgin Islands and the Danish company, West Indian Company, Ltd. (WICO). The courts of the administering Power had decided in favour of WICO without taking into account the status of the United States Virgin Islands as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. WICO thus had the power to develop the harbour area of Charlotte

(Ms. Bourne)

Amalie, the capital of Saint Thomas, and to exercise its property rights on land reclaimed from the sea that was free from most of the relevant governmental regulations in force.

42. The administering Power had proposed that the Government should utilize its power of expropriation by immediately paying the market value for the landfill. However, for lack of funds, the Government was incapable of exercising that power. Under pressure from the public and from the international community, WICO had offered to sell all of its shares to the Government for $65 million. However, it had imposed impossible deadlines for the signing of the contract and the consummation of the sale, leading to speculation in many quarters that the offer had been simply a manoeuvre, especially since WICO had unilaterally decided to call a halt to the negotiations.

43. Furthermore, WICO had put forward a plan for development of the landfill and surrounding areas, which would have an adverse impact, particularly on the marine environment. In addition, by submitting the same documentation to obtain permits for both the landfill and the adjacent land, WICO was apparently trying to have the same favourable terms applied to the latter as to the former.

44. Since the issue was above all an issue of sovereignty, she urgently requested the United Nations to persuade the administering Power to provide the Territory with the needed resources to allow it to resolve the problem.

45. Ms. Bourne withdrew.

Hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories

46. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its second meeting he had informed the Committee that the representative of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands wished to speak at the current meeting. With the approval of the Committee and in accordance with established practice, he suggested that the Committee should invite that representative to make a statement.

47. It was so decided.

48. Mr. CORBIN (Representative of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands) said that the omnibus resolution recommended by the Special Committee accurately reflected the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and he therefore urged the Committee to adopt it. He noted that the decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly on decolonization were not being properly implemented since there was no requirement for a report on implementation.

49. In the important recommendations they had adopted (A/AC.109/1114), the participants in the Regional Seminar to Review the Special Development of Island Territories, held in Grenada in 1991, had reiterated their support for

(Mr. Corbin)

the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and emphasized the need for its implementation in relation to the remaining colonial Territories without any conditions or reservations; called for the creation of specific programmes to guide and assist the economic development of those Territories, stressed the need for the Non-Self-Governing Territories to be included in the programmes of the United Nations system in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; called for greater participation in subregional, regional and international organizations; called on the Special Committee to collaborate with the Working Group of Non-Independent Caribbean Countries of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee; asked for provision to be made for representatives of elected governments of the territories to participate as observers at meetings of the Special Committee and its subcommittee, and in technical meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly; called for an intensification of the provision of information on decolonization to the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories; and called on the United Nations to establish a mechanism for representing the interests of those Territories and articulating their needs.

50. It was disappointing that, as in the past, the United Nations system had failed to take into account the recommendations made by the representatives of the Territories. Even the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in the field of decolonization had not been implemented; in that respect, he rejected the argument that that situation was the result of budgetary difficulties. The United Nations must adapt its methodology to the decolonization process and work to support the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations could take advantage of its ongoing restructuring and the current international situation to complete the decolonization process, as advocated by the Secretary-General in "An agenda for peace", by ensuring the participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the process of self-determination.

51. Mr.Corbin withdrew.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/47/23 (parts II to VII), A/47/506; A/C.4/47/2 and Add.1-3, A/C.4/47/3, A/C.4/47/4, A/C.4/47/6-8, A/C.4/47/12; A/AC.109/1077-1106, 1108-1113, 1116-1120, 1123-1135; A/AC.109/L.1785; S/23299, S/23362, S/24040 and S/24464)

AGENDA ITEM 98: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/189, A/47/204-S/23887, A/47/240, A/47/473)

AGENDA ITEM 99: ACTIVITIES OF THOSE FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH IMPEDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/C.4/47/5)

AGENDA ITEM 100: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/281 and Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/47/3 (chap. I and V, sect. B); E/1992/85)

AGENDA ITEM 101: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/47/486)

52. Mr. CHIARADIA (Argentina), speaking also on behalf of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, reaffirmed the commitment of those countries to the cause of decolonization and their support for the work of the Fourth Committee and of the Special Committee on decolonization. Although that was the area in which the United Nations had achieved the greatest success, much remained to be done to conclude the decolonization process, taking into account, in particular, the current background of a rapidly changing international situation.

53. He welcomed the revised programme of work and the merging of the two subcommittees of the Special Committee; he was encouraged that that trend was growing and was producing concrete results which benefited the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the decolonization process in general.

54. At the same time, he acknowledged the progress made by the Fourth Committee in achieving consensus on many issues; the efforts in that field should be increased so as to find pragmatic solutions and new approaches in line with the changes that had occurred in the international situation, the ultimate objective being the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

55. The countries on behalf of which he was speaking noted with satisfaction that more flexible relations were being developed between the Committee and the Special Committee and real complementarity was being established between the activities of the two bodies. It would be very useful for the bureaux of the Committee and of the Special Committee to coordinate their work regularly, both during the regular session of the General Assembly and at the session of the Special Committee.

56. The implementation of resolution 1514 (XV) and the completion of the decolonization process required a combined effort of the administering Powers and the decolonization bodies of the United Nations. In that respect, he called on the administering Powers to submit regular up-to-date information, including economic and demographic data, on political, economic and social changes, in the Territories they administered. The administering Powers should also allow access to the Territories by visiting missions which, through direct contact with the population, could provide the United Nations with additional information.

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

57. Similarly, the United Nations and the administering Powers should jointly ensure that the indigenous peoples were duly informed of the options available to them when deciding on their political future. They should also be informed about the economic possibilities offered by the development of their natural resources - which they should freely control - and about environmental protection. Care must also be taken to ensure that the colonial Territories and adjacent areas were not used for the conduct of nuclear tests or the deployment of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, or for illegal purposes such as drug trafficking or the laundering of drug money. It should be noted that military installations and bases in the Non-Self-Governing Territories could very often be an obstacle to the implementation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

58. It was important that there should be an adequate economic base to support the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the genuine exercise of their right of self-determination; in that respect, foreign economic activities must not run counter to those objectives. Care must therefore be taken to ensure that the development of natural resources took place in the context of sustainable development and that the benefits secured were used for the peoples of those Territories.

59. The group of countries on behalf of which he was speaking reaffirmed that the United Nations and especially its bodies dealing with decolonization should continue to participate actively in the various decolonization processes in respect of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, within the framework of the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV).

60. As to the Latin American region, the countries on behalf of which he was speaking, noting the current state of bilateral relations between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom, believed that the understanding between those two nations was conducive to the resumption of negotiations with the aim of finding a just and lasting solution to the dispute concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands.

61. With regard to Western Sahara, the eleven countries called on the two sides to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and his special representative in implementing the provisions of the United Nations peace plan, which the Security Council had approved and supported in resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), so that a free and fair referendum could be held, affording the Saharan people the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination, with the active participation of the United Nations through MINURSO.

62. With regard to New Caledonia, those countries considered that dialogue between the parties was the most appropriate method of finding just solutions and adopting the necessary measures to ensure that, within the framework of

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

the Matignon Agreement, the inhabitants of New Caledonia would be able to exercise their right to self-determination in the best possible conditions in 1998.

63. On the subject of East Timor, they expressed their firm support for the dialogue entered into between the Indonesian and Portuguese Governments under the auspices of the Secretary-General and hoped that it would lead to a just and lasting solution.

64. The international community, including the administering Powers, agreed that colonialism was anachronistic and had no place in the present international context. It should therefore be easy to complete the decolonization process speedily, although it must be stressed that the few remaining colonial cases were no less important than those that had already been settled in various ways. All that was needed was political will; whatever the difficulties, the United Nations and its Members were duty bound to bring the process to a successful conclusion.

65. Mr. EVANS (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that decolonization was a major success story of the postwar period. The United Nations had played a crucial role in that regard, and support must be given to the principle of self-determination and actions consistent with the Charter aimed at eliminating colonialism, irrespective of the geographical location and size of the Non-Self-Governing Territory.

66. In the previous year, the European Community and its member States, supported by the delegations of other States, had drawn attention to the fact that the draft resolutions and decisions submitted to the Committee contained elements and language which did not in any way serve the real interests of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, and it was therefore regrettable to note that those drafts were virtually unchanged. They were based on the unacceptable premise that the Territories in question had not been authorized by the administering Powers to exercise their right to self-determination. The use of needlessly confrontational language and of references to issues and agenda items which were totally irrelevant to the work of the Committee and to the interests of the Non-Self-Governing Territories must cease. It was therefore most disappointing to see once again, in the draft texts submitted to the Committee, references to apartheid which were no longer relevant to decolonization since Namibia had gained independence in March 1990. The also objected to the consideration of a draft decision relating to military activities, since that was not an item allocated to the Fourth Committee.

67. Although the rationalization of the work of the Committee was welcome, that process must continue, in particular with the incorporation of the agenda of the Special Political Committee into the work of the Fourth Committee, while maintaining the respective mandates of the two bodies.

(Mr. Evans, United Kingdom)

68. Two regional issues were of particular importance to the European Community and its member States. In Western Sahara, they supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and the work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and hoped that a referendum would be held as planned. In East Timor, they warmly welcomed the resumption of the dialogue between the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal and hoped that it would lead to a comprehensive, just and internationally accepted settlement.

69. Mr. MAINO (Papua New Guinea) supported the Secretary-General's report entitled "An agenda for Peace" as an initiative in the right direction, and undertook to cooperate with other States in addressing the pressing issues faced by the Organization, especially in the field of decolonization. All Member States of the United Nations must abide by their obligations under the Charter and honour General Assembly resolutions. Since the adoption, in 1960, of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), over 80 colonies and dependent Territories had become self-governing or independent, but decolonization was not complete and must remain a priority in order to implement General Assembly resolution 43/47 concerning the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

70. The measures already taken to review the work of the Special Committee in response to the concerns expressed by delegations were encouraging, especially the merger of the two subcommittees, the consolidation and streamlining of resolutions and the harmonization of the wording of resolutions and decisions. The review process must be a continuous one so that the Committee could respond as efficiently and effectively as possible, but the approach adopted must take due account of the specific needs and conditions of the Territories concerned.

71. Most of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were small islands located in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. They had limited resources and were vulnerable to natural disasters and unplanned exploitation of natural resources, as well as to illicit activities such as drug trafficking and money laundering. The cooperation of the administering Powers, an obligation under Article 73 of the Charter, was essential in that regard, as well as for the implementation of the Plan of Action of the International Decade to Eradicate Colonialism by the Year 2000.

72. The seminars on decolonization held since 1990 had proved useful, especially for the dissemination of information, and further seminars should therefore be organized. Papua New Guinea would be hosting the Pacific regional seminar on decolonization in 1993. The participation of representatives from the Territories was vital, and they should be given financial assistance for that purpose.

(Mr. Maino, Papua New Guinea)

73. Papua New Guinea welcomed the positive measures taken by the South African authorities towards dismantling apartheid during the previous year, but sanctions must be maintained until the South African regime had fully complied with the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa.

74. With reference to Western Sahara, it was to be hoped that the parties concerned would cooperate fully in implementing the United Nations plan.

75. He hoped that similar initiatives would also be taken in regard to the remaining Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories, including New Caledonia, so that their peoples could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the Charter and the Declaration. He called upon the General Assembly to provide the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee with the necessary means to pursue their work towards fulfilling the goals set out in General Assembly resolution 43/47, namely to achieve complete decolonization by the year 2000.

76. Ms. LIU Sha (China) said that 1992 was the second year of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, an important historical task of the United Nations. Over several decades, the peoples of colonies and Non-Self-Governing Territories, encouraged by the Declaration on decolonization, had rid themselves of colonial rule and had become independent. The colonial structure had collapsed, reflecting an inexorable historical trend.

77. Despite the great victories won, the vestiges of colonialism had not yet been totally eliminated. A dozen or so Non-Self-Governing Territories had yet to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. China had consistently held that those countries must be able to choose their political status freely and settle issues relating to their economic development independently. No country had the right to station troops or establish military bases in those Territories. Foreign economic entities operating there should fully respect the interests of the Territories. The administering Powers must promote the development of the local peoples in all spheres.

78. China supported the United Nations activities aimed at eradicating colonialism by the year 2000. It welcomed the contribution of the Special Committee and supported the recommendations put forward in its report.

79. The Committee's workload had decreased considerably as compared with the 1960s and 1970s. His delegation consequently welcomed the measures taken to raise the efficiency of the Special Committee, such as the merging of the two subcommittees and the decision to adopt an omnibus resolution. In conclusion, it was ready to continue along those lines and cooperate with other Member States with a view to achieving the goal of eliminating colonialism completely as soon as possible.

80. Mr. RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that, given the success achieved by the United Nations in the area of decolonization, it would be easy to dismiss the last few remaining colonial concerns by arguing that they had a lower priority. That, however, was not the case. At that point, he wished to pay tribute to a Brazilian diplomat, Mr. Houaiss, who had championed the noble principles of decolonization in the early 1960s. None the less, the task begun by Mr. Houaiss and his colleagues some 30 years ago, while approaching its end, still remained unfinished.

81. His delegation wished to draw attention to the role played by the Special Committee on decolonization. In order to facilitate the work of the Fourth Committee, the Special Committee should continue to improve and diversify its work, taking into account the need to bring its decisions into line with a changing international reality. The objective remained the same, namely promoting the cause of self-determination until colonialism was completely eradicated. It should, however, concern itself first and foremost with expanding the political and economic base of the Territories in order to ensure the exercise of their right to self-determination and independence.

82. That led to the question of economic activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Brazil fully supported the principle of establishing an adequate economic base; the economic advancement of colonial peoples was an objective enshrined in the United Nations Charter and could prove to be a significant force in furthering the objective of self-determination. Quite simply, the United Nations and the administering Powers should jointly ensure that economic activities did not harm the environment and that any profits gained from such activities were used to benefit the people in those Territories. Accordingly, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and their adjacent areas should not be used for the testing, deployment or stockpiling of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. A reassessment should also be made of the role of military installations and bases in those Territories, as they could - and often did - constitute an obstacle to implementing the principles of the Charter and the Declaration, particularly at a time when political and ideological rivalries gave way to cooperation and concord.

83. With regard to the question of Western Sahara, Brazil welcomed the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the referendum, as well as the actions taken by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to allow the people of Western Sahara to determine freely their political destiny. He hoped that draft resolution A/C.4/47/L.2 would be adopted by consensus.

84. Regarding East Timor, his delegation had noted with satisfaction the contacts between the Governments of Portugal and Indonesia, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, aimed at creating an atmosphere conducive to substantive negotiations on the self-determination of the people of Timor. Such developments were encouraging, and he hoped they would lead to a fair, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question.

(Mr. Ribeiro, Brazil)

85. Finally, Brazil joined Argentina in expressing hope that the current understanding between Argentina and the United Kingdom would favour the resumption of negotiations aimed at finding a fair and definitive solution to the dispute on the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands.

86. The end of the cold war had become a leitmotiv in world politics. His delegation believed that, in view of its historic background, the Fourth Commmittee was in a position to influence positively the process of international system restructuring. Current times were rich in questions but very poor in satisfactory answers. The reply was to be found in the Committee's own files. The democratization of the international system had started when most peoples of the world were granted self-determination. If efforts were made to organize the international community on a totally democratic basis and to build a world where democratic principles were respected and applied, no colonial Territory should be deprived of the right to self-determination, which ultimately rested on the principle of popular sovereignty. Thus, the changes in the international scenario, as well as the lessons which could be learnt from it, highlighted the importance of finally eradicating all colonial situations. That remained the task and the responsibility of the Fourth Committee, and would be its valuable contribution to the construction of a truly democratic world.

87. Mr. JENIE (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his Government was opposed to consideration of the so-called question of East Timor; the people of East Timor had freely exercised its legitimate right to self-determination in full compliance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The outcome had been the clear and undeniable wish for East Timor to become part of the Republic of Indonesia. The principles and objectives cherished by all members of the Committee had been fully respected, and that act of self-determination had closed a long chapter in the history of colonialism in Indonesia. In order to illustrate how fully the inhabitants of East Timor were integrated in Indonesia, he told the Committee that, during the last elections to both the regional and national Houses of Representatives, held on 9 June 1992, a very high proportion of them had taken part in the popular consultations. In that manner, they had elected their representatives and their governor, Mr. Suarez, who was now the fifth governor of the province since East Timor had become part of Indonesia. It was therefore evident that the inhabitants of East Timor had expressed their political opinion and participated fully in Indonesian political life.

88. Mr. RIBEIRO-TELLES (Portugal), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, wished to draw attention to the fact that East Timor was a Non-Self-Governing Territory under Portuguese jurisdiction, which appeared on the list (drawn up on the authority of the General Assembly) of Territories to be studied by the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on decolonization. In addition, Chapter XI of the Charter was still applicable in East Timor. The United Nations and the international community had never recognized that the process of decolonization had been brought to a

(Mr. Ribeiro-Telles, Portugal)

satisfactory end in East Timor. The so-called "acts of free choice" referred to by the Indonesian representative had never been accepted by the international community, which reaffirmed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. Furthermore, Indonesia had hitherto refused to implement those resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council which required the immediate withdrawal of its forces from the Territory of East Timor, which it had been illegally occupying since the invasion of December 1975.

89. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that rights of reply were limited to two statements per delegation on any one question at any one meeting. The first statement should be no longer than 10 minutes and the second no longer than five minutes.

90. MR. JENIE (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, repeated that the process of decolonization had been carried out strictly according to General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). The result had been that East Timor had achieved independence by becoming part of Indonesia. The people of East Timor lived in peace, stability and security and fully enjoyed the benefits and progress to which all Indonesians were entitled, a fact which was recognized by an increasing number of countries.

91. Mr. RIBEIRO-TELLES (Portugal), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, repeated yet again that the United Nations and the international community had never recognized that the process of decolonization had been brought to a satisfactory end with regard to East Timor.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING

92. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its 3rd plenary meeting on 18 September, the General Assembly had referred agenda item 105 concerning programme planning back to the Fourth Committee. The corresponding programmes (1 and 4) were contained in document A/47/6. Member States who wished to make their views known on the programmes in question should do so in writing and submit them by 26 October to the Chairman of the Committee for transmission to the President of the General Assembly. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the members of the Committee approved that procedure.

93. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 101: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

94. The CHAIRMAN informed the members of the Committee that the text of the draft resolution on that particular agenda item had been circulated and that he had additional copies if needed. He asked them to study the text of the draft for final consideration during the current session.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.